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Election Law, Austrian. A law of January 6, 1907, has altered in an important respect the Austrian fundamental law concerning imperial representation, substituting universal suffrage for a system of class representation. The important part of this law is that which amends section 7 of the fundamental law. The part of it relating to the electoral franchise reads as follows:

"Every male person who has attained the age of twenty-four years, who is not excluded from the right to vote by the provisions of the election law of the Reichsrath,¹ and who at the time the election is ordered, has resided for at least one year in the Austrian commune in which the right to vote is to be exercised, is qualified to vote for representatives."

An election law of the same date makes detailed provisions for the conduct of the elections under the new system; except in Galicia one representative is chosen in each election district; each commune forms a voting precinct. Elections under this law took place May 15 to 23. The new Reichsrath assembled on June 18.

Heretofore there have been five classes of electors: (1) The great land owners, comprising those who paid a certain land tax, varying in the several provinces from 50 to 250 florins; this class elected 85 representatives. (2) The cities, where the electoral franchise was extended to all males of the age of twenty-four who paid a direct tax of five florins; this class elected 99 representatives. (3) Chambers of commerce and of industry; this class alone elected 21 representatives, and together with the second class chose 19 others. (4) Rural communes, in which the qualifications for voting were the same as in the cities; this class elected 129 representatives. (5) A fifth class, created by law of June 14, 1896, included all males who had attained the age of twenty-four years, i. e., universal male suffrage prevailed in this class, which elected 72 representatives.

Under the class system of voting nearly one-half of the representatives were chosen by the Germans, who possess much the greater part of the wealth of the country, but form only a little more than one-third of the total population; by the new law the non-German populations for the first time control a decided majority of the house of representatives, the membership of which has been increased from 425 to 516. At the same time another constitutional amendment provided that the number of life members in the house of lords should not exceed 170 nor fall below 150.

W. F. DODD.

¹These provisions relate to exclusion from the right to vote because of bankruptcy, conviction of crime, receipt of poor relief and certain other reasons.